

The New York Independent has a pertinent editorial in its last issue, which we give below, as well adapted to our own readers.

"The Old Year goes, the New Year comes now as ever since the birth of Time. What hopes are justified by the promise of the opening year?"

But first let us reverently thank God for all His mercies, and specially for those which History will identify with 1864. Prominent among these, let American patriots be grateful—

I. For the fortitude and patient courage evinced by our people in view of the reverses and losses with which this year was ushered in, particularly in the South-West, where it had been reasonably and confidently expected that the Rebellion would be thoroughly and finally crushed by the combined operations of Gens. Banks, Steele, and others—

Ample means, it was believed, were provided; they should have been so wielded as to restore to loyalty all of our country that lies Westward of the Mississippi. The campaign failed; Gen. Banks was defeated and driven back with heavy loss; yet the Loyal Millions, though sorely disappointed, were not disheartened. So also of their expectation that Lee would be routed and Richmond taken by Gen. Grant's resolute and sanguinary offensive operations in Eastern Virginia. The heart of the Nation beat time to his advancing footsteps, but did not faint nor sink when he was stopped by the enemy's deadly fire from behind impregnable intrenchments.

II. For the ability vouchsafed to our people to maintain the pecuniary solvency of their Government under every phase of discouragement and depression. The bankruptcy of the Treasury must have been swiftly followed by an ignominious end of the War through the proclaimed inability of our Government to persist in it. Yet in the darkest hours of the Contest—and some of them have been very dark—our National promises to pay have retained their value and currency, and the ability of our Government to borrow, though weakened, has never been suspended.

III. For the wisdom as well as humanity with which we have been enabled to resist every temptation to inaugurate—or, rather, to accept—a general massacre of prisoners as a necessary incident of our struggle against slavesholding treason. It has been the manifest intent of the more malignant and desperate Rebels to force on this dire alternative. Their massacres of disarmed, pleading, and even wounded men at Fort Pillow and elsewhere can have had no other motive. Yet, though inhumanly butchered by the traitors, our soldiers have not retaliated, and our Government has never been driven to disregard the more merciful dictates of the laws of War. We have long held a large excess of Rebel prisoners; many of them are natives and citizens of States incontestably loyal; nearly all their field officers have sworn allegiance to our Government and been educated at its cost; yet none of these have suffered death at our hands, save by wounds received in fair conflict. May it so continue to the end!

IV. For the Christian temper and spirit in which the struggle has on our side been prosecuted. Though the Rebels hate us, we do not hate them. They seek to do us evil; we wish to do them good. They would gladly give our cities to the flames and our fields to desolation; we would cast out the devil that rends them, and see them sitting clothed and in their right mind. They seek to humiliate and abuse us; we lavish our blood and our substance to make the South the garden for which Nature evidently designed it, but which Slavery has hitherto forbidden it to become. The lunatics whom we are constrained to bind will yet thank us for their earthly salvation.

V. For the strong delusion which led the Opposition, by their representatives convened at Chicago, to proclaim so unmistakably their sympathy with the Rebels and their wish for a Peace which should give those Rebels a complete triumph. Their speeches might have been brushed aside as mere ebullitions of individual feeling, but their Platform was an authentic exposition of their real designs. And that Platform was so clearly unpatriotic that they are constrained to ignore and evade it from the moment wherein Victory first unmistakably irradiated the flag of the Union.

VI. For the tide of successes which, commencing with the easy capture of Atlanta, rolled majestically down through the brilliant exploits of Farragut in Mobile Bay, the three vicissitudes of Sheridan in the Shenandoah Valley, to the grand march of Sherman through Georgia, and the utter disasters of Hood in Tennessee, leaving the Unionists masters of every field, with the prospect of further triumphs as decisive, at no distant day.

VII. For the glorious record of People and Army, citizens and soldiers, evinced in our Presidential Elections; the former giving a majority of Three Hundred Thousand, the latter over One Hundred Thousand, for Mr. Lincoln's re-election; the men who are in the field, braving every hardship and courting death for their country's sake, spurning the lures of easy fighting and early peace made contingent on McClellan's success, and voting three or four to one, for Lincoln and the War.

Such are some of the auspices which 1864 has given to 1865, and which justify our fervent hopes that the year now opening will see our country honorably rescued from the perils which environ it, or leave her still nobly confronting them with dauntless courage and unshrinking purpose. We ardently hope for an early Peace based on the integrity of our country and the Freedom of all her People; but, if that be still distant, then we hope for a vigorous and resolute prosecution of the War.

Why More Men are Needed. The New York Post says: "The question at issue now is nothing less than this—Should the war be closed in another campaign, or shall we permit it to drag on for another year, or perhaps, two or three years? If the country comes to the help of the armies in the field, Lee's army can be destroyed within sixty days; and in that case the rebels will not have a single formidable army east of the Mississippi. But if Lee can maintain himself for six months longer—another army can be raised by the rebels in the South, to give us trouble, and to face us even if Lee were destroyed. It is of the most vital importance, therefore, that our armies shall be so strengthened, at once, as to gain this required success over Lee before any other rebel force can be organized and be put into the field."

A couple of whales appeared one day a week or two ago, in Nantucket harbor. They have probably heard of the discovery of the petroleum wells, and feel an interest in the price of oil. A whale's sense of self importance must be graduated like that of the negro slave, who crowed over his fellow darkeys because he was "wuf" several hundred dollars the week.

The XVIII Congressional District.

The Attorney General of the State, Hon. Wm. M. Meredith, having given an elaborate opinion to the effect that neither Gen. Koontz nor Gen. Coffroth was entitled to the certificate of election in consequence of the confused, conflicting, defective, illegal and unsatisfactory nature of the returns respectively made to the Secretary of State by the majority and minority of the return judges of the district, the Governor, in his proclamation announcing the result of the Congressional election throughout the State, which has just been issued, refuses in the following words to give a certificate to either of the contestants:

"And I do further declare that no such returns of the election in the Sixteenth Congressional district have been sent to the Secretary of the Commonwealth, as would, under the act of Assembly of 2d July, 1839, authorize me to proclaim the name of any person as having been duly elected a Member of the House of Representatives of the United States, for that District."

Messrs. Koontz and Coffroth will now have to appeal to the House of Representatives to which they claim to have been elected. That body will refer their case to the Committee on Elections, which will inquire into the facts and report thereon, when a decision will be reached. In the meantime, neither gentlemen will be permitted to take his seat as a member of the House.

Maryland. At the election in Dorchester county, in November, a secessionist was elected Senator, thus giving the rebel sympathisers a majority of the two in the Senate. As the man thus elected would not take the oath of allegiance, even to enable him to vote, and was unwilling to take the oath prescribed by the new Constitution, on taking his seat, he resigned, and Dr. Carroll, the Union candidate, has just been chosen to fill the vacancy, by 225 majority. This makes the Senate a tie, and the Lieutenant Governor, being presiding officer in that body, will have the casting vote. He is a sound Union man; so that on all political questions, the Maryland Senate will be all right.

IMPORTANT PEACE RUMORS.

Several of our exchanges, have what they style "highly important rumors" in regard to an alleged mission to Richmond. We give them as we find them, and for what they are worth. To begin, we quote from the National Intelligencer:

It is stated by the personal friends of Francis P. Blair, Sr., that he has gone to the front. Rumor has it that he is charged with duties requiring communication with the Confederate Government, or possibly a visit (upon invitation) to Jefferson Davis himself. The New York papers, as usual, enlarge upon these rumors, and the Washington correspondent of the World writes:

There are many rumors in connection with the departure of Mr. Blair, all of them of an important political character. Among those which seem to obtain the most credit are two, viz:—

1. That Mr. Blair has been invited to visit Richmond, for the purpose of meeting with the Confederate authorities. The peculiar relations existing between Mr. Blair and the President tend to obtain more general credence for this report. The correspondent of the Times, however, declares that if Mr. Blair, Sr., has gone to Richmond, he has done so "without the knowledge of high officials" at Washington. The Washington correspondent of the Herald, writing on Sunday night, says:

The fact that F. P. Blair, Sr., and Montgomery Blair have gone to City Point, is making quite a sensation to-night. Various rumors are in circulation in regard to the object of their mission, that which gains most credence being that they have gone for the purpose of meeting representatives of the rebel government. Some parties argue that this is the inauguration of peace negotiations; but nothing reliable can be ascertained in regard to the matter.

The New York Herald says: A most important rumor reaches us from Washington, to the effect that Francis P. Blair, Sr., and Montgomery Blair, his son, are on their way to Richmond for a personal conference with Jeff. Davis, with a view to bring about a peace between the North and South. The intimate personal relations of the Blairs with Mr. Lincoln, and their intimacy with the heads of the Confederate Government, give this informal Peace Commission a large share of public consideration. It is met and proper that the opening of a new year should be signalized by an attempt, at least to end this murderous and wasteful war. May Heaven smile upon this effort to bring peace to our distracted country!

The Call for Volunteers—Important Circular. The following is a copy of an address issued to the people of Pennsylvania, by Major Dodge, A. A. Provost Marshal General. Our readers should give it a careful perusal, and act accordingly. Every man is interested in the matter, and should assist in filling quotas in the manner mentioned:—

ATTENTION!—The President has called for 200,000 men to be raised by volunteers, or drafted. The 15th of February, 1865, has been fixed upon as the day of draft. If your quotas are not filled by volunteers by that time the deficiency will most certainly be made up by draft.

Ward and Township committees are earnestly invited to commence work on this. The longer you delay the more difficult will be your task. The attention of these committees is also invited to the necessity and propriety of delivering up to the District Provost Marshals all delinquents from former drafts.

It is impossible for the United States authorities to find these men, scattered as they are by their friends and by persons hostile to the Government. Committees, United States, State and County officers, and all good citizens are requested to arrest these men, and deliver them to the Provost Marshals. Every man so arrested and put into service by the Board of Enrollment counts one toward filling your quota.

Information by letter or otherwise, furnished to District Provost Marshals, of the whereabouts of these delinquents, will be thankfully received and promptly acted upon.

Provost Marshals will cause lists of delinquents from all former drafts to be made and distributed to the end that all so disposed may understand, by assist in forcing these delinquents to perform their duty to their country and to their own people. Bring in all your delinquents; exert yourselves to put in volunteers; and the necessity of a draft will be avoided.

Our armies and navies are everywhere victorious. The dawn of peace is at hand. One powerful blow now given, will be fatal to the Rebellion. Let us all, in our several capacities, and as far as in us lies, unite to make that blow effective and final. RICHARD L. DODGE, Major 12th Inf. A. A. P. M. G. Harrisburg, Dec. 22, 1864.

THE WAR FOR THE UNION.

FROM WILMINGTON.

Report of Admiral Porter.

Effect of the Explosion of the Powder Vessel.

The Combined Attack on Fort Fisher.

SIX OF OUR PARROT GUNS EXPLODED.

Letter From General Butler.

THE ASSAULT BY LAND ABANDONED.

Fort Fisher Uninjured by the Bombardment.

Special Western Associated Press Dispatch.

New York, Dec. 29.—Admiral Porter's full report of the operations against Wilmington is received by the Navy Department. It is dated the 10th of New Inlet, from the flag ship Malvern. The following is a gist of the report: The attack was opened on the 24th with all the iron clads and heavy vessels—three in all—being held in reserve previous to making the attack. A torpedo of a large scale, supposed to contain powder enough to explode the magazine of the fort, was carefully prepared under command of Commodore A. C. Rhind, and exploded under the fort.

So much had been said about the terrible results of the powder explosion recently, in England, that great results were expected from the explosion. The boat prepared at New York was towed out to Beaufort and filled with powder. The Louisiana was disguised as a blockade runner by painting her white and adding another smoke stack. Every preparation for her success was completed. Gen. Butler had arrived at the rendezvous point to the concentration of the fleet, and every effort was made to have as brief a delay as possible.

On the 18th Admiral Porter sailed from Beaufort for the rendezvous, twenty miles east of New Inlet, and found most of the fleet assembled there.

The 20th a heavy gale sprang up, which he fleet managed to ride out with out accident, except the loss of a few anchors. The transports, being short of water, and not fitted for so severe weather, put into Beaufort and remained until the storm was over.

On the 23rd Commodore Rhind was ordered to make ready to explode his torpedo under Fort Fisher, and at 10:30 P. M. the Louisiana starts in tow of the Wilderness. As soon as the embankment of the fort were in sight the Wilderness came off and proceeded under steam to within two hundred yards of the fort, where she was anchored. A blockade runner went directly ahead of her, thereby enabling Commodore Rhind to make all his preparations without suspicion.

After everything was ready the fuses were lighted, and the party escaped to the Wilderness, which immediately exploded at forty-five minutes past ten o'clock on the morning of the 24th, and was at all like what was expected. The vessels in the fleet were shaken but little. At daylight the fort moved in, and at 11:30 A. M. the attack commenced. It was opened in five sally, by the New Ironsides, followed by the Massachusetts, the Minnesota and the North Carolina. The shells were directed at the northeast face; only five were directed at the fort, and these were soon silenced.

The Minnesota and other large vessels next took their position and delivered their fire rapidly. As soon as they opened, the fort was so severely shelled that the enemy took to the water, and by 11:30 A. M. the fort was in the hands of the Union fleet. The shells were directed at the northeast face; only five were directed at the fort, and these were soon silenced.

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Fisher, they were both of the opinion that the place could not be carried by an assault, as it was left substantially uninjured by the fire from the navy.

There were seventeen guns, protected by traverses, only two of them being dismounted, the balance being directed on the beach and covering the only practicable route of a regular siege.

The prisoners captured as previously reported, state that Hoke's division from Lee's army arrived at Wilmington the night before the attack.

Gen. Weitzel advanced his skirmish line within fifty yards of the fort, while the enemy was kept in bomb-proof.

The dispatch captured on an orderly was an order from Gen. Whiting to bring a battery of light guns into the fort. A few of our men entered the fort while the shells from the fleet were falling around them.

As soon as the fire of the navy ceased, at dark the fort was resumed as fully as ever, and opened with grape and canister upon our picket line. Nothing but the operations of a regular siege would serve to reduce the fort. These were not in accordance with the instructions, and as the weather came on unfavorable, Gen. Butler gave orders for re-embarking. Gen. Butler's engineers sustain his opinion that Fort Fisher was practically captured by the bombardment.

A general report to General Butler's letter, said he had ordered large shells to go to Beaufort, for ammunition, and be ready to renew the attack, in case it was decided to continue it.

He stated that he had not commenced to fire rapidly, and could keep all the rebels out of sight until the troops were within twenty yards of the fort. He was of the opinion that an assault could be successfully made, but if made, he would not wish to place his judgment in opposition to that of Gen. Weitzel, who had made a survey of the enemy's works.

In conclusion he said the beach would probably be smoothed in a short time, when all the men on shore could be safely taken off.

THE FALL OF SAVANNAH.

Secretary Stanton, under the date of Sunday evening, 25th ult., sends the following dispatch to Gen. Dix, announcing the capture of Savannah, Ga. He says:—A dispatch has been received this evening by the President from Gen. Sherman. It is dated Savannah, Thursday, 22d instant, and announces his occupation of the city of Savannah and the capture of one hundred and fifty guns, plenty of ammunition and about twenty-five thousand bales of cotton. No other particulars are given. An official dispatch from Gen. Foster to Gen. Grant, dated on the 22d instant, at 7 P. M. states that the city of Savannah was occupied by the Union forces on the morning of the 21st, and that on the preceding afternoon and night Hoke escaped with the main body of his infantry and light artillery, blowing up the iron clads and the Navy Yard. He enumerated, as captured, 800 prisoners, 150 guns, 130 locomotives in good order, 150 cars and a large lot of ammunition and materials of war.

The Dispatches of Gens. Sherman and Foster are as follows:

GEN. SHERMAN TO THE PRESIDENT. SAVANNAH, GA., December 23d.—His Excellency President Lincoln, I—I beg to inform you, as a Christmas Gift, the city of Savannah, with one hundred and fifty heavy guns and plenty of ammunition and also about 25,000 bales of cotton. (Signed) W. T. SHERMAN, Major-General.

MAJOR-GENERAL FOSTER'S DISPATCH. STEAMER GOLDEN GATE, SAVANNAH, December 23d, 7 P. M.—General Grant and Major-General Halleck—I have the honor to report that I have just returned from General Sherman's Headquarters at Savannah, and I beg to inform you, as a Christmas Gift, the city of Savannah, with one hundred and fifty heavy guns and plenty of ammunition and also about 25,000 bales of cotton. (Signed) J. G. FOSTER, Maj. Gen.

Return of Butler's forces to Fortress Monroe—Admiral Porter still bombarding Fort Fisher.

Nearly all the steamers comprising the portion of the expeditionary fleet under the command of Major-General Butler, which sailed hence several days since, have returned in safety, notwithstanding the severe storms along the coast, and while anchored at Wilmington, N. C. The rest of the fleet, which consists of the North Carolina, the Minnesota and Fort Jackson have been the only vessels attached to the naval fleet which have as yet arrived from off Wilmington, and the latest advices received from Admiral Porter, represent him as still subjecting Fort Fisher to a vigorous bombardment.

The Norfolk Register of to-day contains the following correspondence from off Fort Fisher, dated the 27th of December: "The shore is strewn with broken boats, mostly by naval, which have been wrecked one way or the other. They lie strewn along the beach, from Fort Fisher to Masonboro Inlet. Many of the vessels were destroyed by fire last Saturday. Many of the navy vessels have withdrawn from the waters, and the bombardment may be said to have come to an end. "In my last letter it was insisted that there was, in some cases, a want of co-operation between the army and the navy. I think that I established that fact, but let me say, to avoid all mistake, that there were in individual instances, and quite a number of them, where naval officers acted in concert with the army."

Two hundred and fifty of the North Carolina reserves, captured by Major General Butler in the vicinity of Fort Fisher, disembarked from the steamer Baltic yesterday afternoon, on route for Point Lookout, Maryland. "Bragg reports that with his present means and disposition of his forces no danger need be apprehended. Had reinforcements arrived sooner, we might have captured many prisoners. The enemy drew up in a semi-circle and poured a cannon fire into Fort Fisher, destroying every house and blowing up the ground. There was another heavy gale last night."

The condition of these prisoners is exceedingly wretched, many of them being without blankets or overcoats, and in some cases they were shoeless. Two-thirds of the number apparently had not yet reached the age of twenty-one, and the remainder of the third of them ranged between the ages of twelve and sixteen years.

The Rebel Movements to "Astonish the World." Rebel deserters recently reported that the authorities at Richmond were discussing and maturing a movement at which would astonish the world. This effect would doubtless be produced if the following, from the Alexandria (Va.) Journal, is arranged to blow up the vessel in case the rebels should take it by boarding. The officers and crew of the monitors are complimented for their part in riding out the gale and for gallantry in action.

Admiral Porter closes by saying: There are about one thousand men left on shore by the army, who have not yet got off on account of the draft on the beach. They will be taken off in the morning, and the soldiers will then be sent home by the bombardment of the 25th firing was slow for several hours. The enemy had twenty-nine guns on his upper battery, and managed to sink several vessels, through without doing much damage.

Accompanying the report is a letter from Gen. Butler, with Admiral Porter's reply. Gen. Butler says: Upon landing the troops and accompanying Gen. Weitzel in a thorough reconnaissance of Fort Fisher, they were both of the opinion that the place could not be carried by an assault, as it was left substantially uninjured by the fire from the navy.

There were seventeen guns, protected by traverses, only two of them being dismounted, the balance being directed on the beach and covering the only practicable route of a regular siege. The prisoners captured as previously reported, state that Hoke's division from Lee's army arrived at Wilmington the night before the attack.

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WASHINGTON.

The Herald's Washington special says: The prisoner question is just now a subject of serious consideration, and apprehensions are entertained that it may be made a subject of congressional investigation, when it may possibly appear that our own government is not free from blame in continuing the suffering of our prisoners. The rebels officially allege that do the best they can, and have invited our government to send for our prisoners and bring them home.

The Times special says: Notwithstanding there was an agreement made some two months ago between Gens. Grant and Lee that each of the parties should send blankets and medical stores to their prisoners, nothing has yet been done. The rebels, however, have been and are still engaged in sending supplies to their prisoners.

The Commercial Advertiser's Washington special says: Rumor is current of the evacuation of Richmond by the rebels.

The aspect of military and naval news is very encouraging. A Washington dispatch says: A rebel spy was recently captured near City Point, upon whose person elaborate drawing and descriptive sketches of our defenses in this locality were found. It is stated that when taken he was on his way to City Point to complete his mission, by examining the inner line of works at that place.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 31. Col. Seaton, after an active service of more than two years, announces that after to-day the proprietorship of the editorial management of the National Intelligencer will pass into other hands. James C. Welling also retires from that establishment.

The trial of Col. North, New York Military State Agent, and M. M. Jones and Levi Ochs, will be concluded Tuesday. It has been pending before the military commission a month and a half. Pardon Worsley, the detective and spy, on whose information a number of merchants of Washington and Baltimore were arrested some weeks ago charged with selling goods to the rebels, has made an affidavit before the proper authorities that, having played at a gambling-house for \$3,000 of money belonging to the Government. Consequently his processes have been placed in charge of a military guard, pending an investigation into the affair.

The commissary of subsistence has accepted a bid for furnishing the Government with corn-meal at \$7.85 a barrel. The amount \$400,000 has thus been expended in payment of the patronized prices at Annapolis of the commissary of rations due them while in the hands of the rebels. Up to the 1st inst., 8,000 had received their certificates.

The Tribune's Washington special says: The returns to the Provost Marshal General's Bureau show that the number of men raised by recruiting has been larger now than at any period during the present year. Deserters report that the rebels are moving heavy machinery from the arsenals and other public works at Richmond, preparatory to the evacuation of the city.

Official returns show that the number of wounded in the battle of Nashville to be less than three thousand. A gentleman from Savannah says the people are quiet and satisfied with the change. They insist that the tone of the rebel leaders and newspapers did not represent their own feelings. There is no doubt of their readiness to return to the Union as soon as the Government authority can be fairly established.

CONGRESS.

MONDAY, Dec. 19.

SENATE.—A petition was referred to the Judiciary Committee, from citizens who had lost United States certificates asking for indemnity. A petition from three thousand citizens of New York, asking for the abolition of slavery, was referred to the committee on Slavery. The citizens of Iowa petitioned for the repeal of the Reciprocity treaty. The Military Committee reported the House bill to enable aliens who have served in the army and the navy to become citizens of the United States. Mr. Adams introduced a bill to create the rank of Vice Admiral in the navy, which was referred to the Naval Committee. Mr. Doolittle introduced a resolution authorizing the President to expend ten millions of dollars to build fortifications and floating batteries for the protection of the lakes and frontiers from attacks of piratical and hostile expeditions organized in British provinces by enemies of the United States. A long debate ensued, and the order of Gen. Dix, and the recent trade from Canada, were fully discussed. The resolution was finally referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations. Mr. Lane introduced a bill to enable the people of Colorado to form a State government. Also, a resolution authorizing the Secretary of the Treasury to issue bonds for the purchase and reservation of government harbors on lakes Superior and Michigan.

Mr. Brown, of Missouri, offered a resolution calling for the facts concerning the arrest of Lieutenant Governor Jacobs, of Kentucky, which was laid over. The House resolution relative to the adjournment for the holidays was concurred in. A bill to protect Missouri from periodical invasions was introduced.

HOUSE.—Mr. Rice introduced a bill to create the grade of Vice Admiral in the Navy. Mr. Atwood a bill to establish a navy yard and depot at Chicago, Illinois. Mr. Wilson's resolution declaring what States are not entitled to representation in the Electoral College. Mr. Grinnell a bill to amend the revenue laws by changing the time for levying the tax on whisky. Mr. Brown a bill making appropriations for the purchase and reservation of government harbors on lakes Superior and Michigan.

Mr. Davis offered the resolutions declaring that Congress has a constitutional right to an authoritative voice in declaring the foreign policy of the United States, which had been reported by the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and laid on the table. Under a call of the previous question the resolutions were adopted. The Committee on Ways and Means reported a bill providing for an additional duty of fifty cents per gallon on all spirits of domestic production sold for sale on the first of January, 1865, and allowing from February to January, in the 60th section of the internal revenue bill. A demand for the previous question on the bill was not seconded. After some discussion the additional tax on whisky was stricken out, and the bill passed. The House then went into Committee of the Whole, and Mr. Spalding, of Ohio, made a speech.

TUESDAY, Dec. 20.

SENATE.—A petition was received from the Mother Superintendents of the Sisters of Charity, stating that the Sisters wear a certain uniform, manufactured in France, and asking for a restriction of the duties on the same. Also, petitions for increase of pay of officers. The House bill to extend the time allowed for the withdrawal of certain goods from public stores was passed. A bill to increase the number of cadets in the West Point Military Academy, and to raise the standard of admission to the same, was introduced by Mr. Wilson, and referred to the Military Committee. The Naval Committee reported a bill to create the rank of Vice Admiral in the Navy. Passed. The Committee on the District of Columbia reported a bill to inquire into the expediency of requiring all residents of the District to take an oath of allegiance to the government. The Committee on Foreign Affairs reported a substitute for the House bill relative to the termination of the reciprocity treaty. Ordered to be printed. Mr. Wilkinson offered a resolution instructing the Secretary of War to extend to the rebel prisoners treatment similar to that received by our prisoners in rebel hands. Mr. Johnson objected and the resolution lies over. The resolution relative to the arrest of Lieutenant Governor Jacobs, of Kentucky, after some discussion, was called up, and after being slightly amended, was passed. The joint resolution to free the wives and children of colored soldiers was taken up, and was opposed by Mr. Davis. No final action was taken. A committee of conference was appointed to confer with the committee of the Senate on the bill to establish a Bureau of Freedmen's Affairs. After an Executive session adjourned.

THE LEGISLATURE.

The General Assembly convened on Tuesday last. The Senate was called to order by the Speaker W. J. Turrell of Susq. The Secretary of the Commonwealth, being introduced, presented to the Senate the returns of the election for Senators during last year. The returns were read by the Clerk, and the following newly elected members were declared elected, viz: Philadelphia—C. M. Donnan. Chester, Delaware and Montgomery—Horace Royer.

Bucks—O. P. James. Lehigh and Northampton—George B. Shall. Berks—Hiester Clymer. Schuylkill—William M. Randall. Lycoming, Union and Snyder—J. Walls.

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Blair, Huntington, Centre, Millin, Juniata and Perry—L. W. Hall, Kirk Hines, Allegheny—T. J. Bigham.

Crawford and Erie—Morrow B. Lowry. Pursuant to the requirements of the Constitution, the House assembled at 12 o'clock, and was called to order by the Clerk of the House.

The Secretary of the Commonwealth was introduced, and presented the election certificates of the Members of the House of Representatives. The contested election case of the candidates for membership from the district composed of the counties of Somerset, Bedford and Fulton elicited considerable discussion; but was finally decided by a majority of the members voting in favor of the clerk adding to the roll of the House the two candidates receiving the highest number of votes, Mr. Moses A. Bass, of Somerset county, and Mr. D. B. Armstrong, of Bedford. Remarks were made on the subject by Messrs. Brown, Pershing, M'Clure, Sharpe and others.

The House then proceeded to the election of Speaker. Mr. Brown nominated Mr. A. G. Olmstead, of Potter county. Mr. Spangler nominated Mr. Geo. A. Quigley, of Philadelphia.

The following is the result: Arthur S. Olmstead received 60 votes. George A. Quigley " 35 " Mr. Olmstead having received the highest number of votes cast, was declared duly elected Speaker.

Army Correspondence.

CAMP 2d N. C. CAVALRY, NEAR MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE, December 20th, 1864.

EDITOR INQUIRE: For several days past the weather has been dreary, wet, miserable, but as I write the clouds are breaking away in the East, the thermometer is falling rapidly, and the indications are that Jack Frost is determined to pay us another visit. One consolation, he does not tarry long. About a week ago we had a severe hail storm, snow falling at the same time at Cairo to the depth of seven inches. I should not be surprised if we were to have a "drive" of snow before long. The air to-day feels very much like it.

Our regiment, together with the other regiments of the brigade, which had been under marching orders for some time, but were prevented from moving on account of the severity of the weather, received orders night before last to be ready to move the following morning, rain or shine. They were to carry nine days rations hard bread, coffee and sugar, and three of meat. Pack mules "toted" the ammunition, camp kettles and other necessities. Our regiment mounted some nine hundred men, more than all the rest of the brigade. At 7 A. M., yesterday morning they took up their line of march, the rain pouring down in torrents. Reaching the bank of the river, the weather cleared, and we found it had risen so rapidly that it was impossible to force a passage and would be compelled, for the present, to abandon the expedition and return to camp. No force was discovered further than a few pickets, who beat a hasty retreat. They accordingly retraced their steps, reaching camp about 4 P. M. The roads were in a horrid condition. The men have orders not to disturb their rations as they will be called on again as soon as the condition of the roads and streams will justify the attempt. A large number